Testimony by

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Chairman Smith, Congressman Payne, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today on the subject of United Nations peacekeeping and reforms. I applaud your Committee's interest and focus on this important subject. Given the depth of experience within this Committee, many of you know firsthand how UN peace operations can help nations transition from brutal conflicts to nonviolent forms of political expression. The question today is how to improve the ability of such operations to achieve their goals.

As members here know well, the United States supports UN peace operations because they strengthen and reinforce our strategic and national interests, as well as further our commitment to humanitarian goals and human rights. Operations range widely today, from monitoring border agreements (Ethiopia/Eritrea) to helping countries implement peace where brutal wars inflicted atrocities against civilians (Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo); from supporting new democratic governments and the rule of law (East Timor, Afghanistan) to providing security in states recovering from civil war (Sierra Leone, Liberia).

United Nations peace operations are being severely tested on many fronts. Peacekeepers provided to the UN have failed to protect civilians, instead engaging in sexual misconduct and illegal activities while deployed. Never before has the UN witnessed this magnitude of alleged sexual exploitation and abuse as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The UN and its member states must fully embrace reforms, and move forward on the recommendations of the report of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), among others. The United Nations has also underestimated the test it would face from criminal and rebel groups on the ground, as evidenced by the deaths of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Ituri region of the DRC in February 2005. Indeed, peacekeeping has grown more complex, challenging UN member states and UN headquarters to keep pace with the requirements established by Security Council.

Much has improved, too. The United Nations has embraced peacekeeping reforms following the 2000 Brahimi Report, developed its Best Practices Unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and sustained on-going efforts to improve its functions. Operations are showing signs of success, including tow that are now winding down, in Timor-Lest and Sierra Leone. The UN has applied lessons from past operations to new ones, improved its mission planning and logistics capacity, and tried to be candid about how to match UN mandates with field missions, even when the Security Council did not want to hear it.

My testimony today reviews three areas that impact on the quality and effectiveness of UN peace operations. First, I consider current peace operations and their broad challenges today. Second, I review specific recommendations for UN reform and efforts to make peace operations more successful. Finally I suggest US policy options for Congress to consider in developing a reform agenda at the United Nations. These comments reflect my work at the Henry L. Stimson Center, where I have co-directed a project examining the record of implementation of UN peacekeeping reforms in the Brahimi Report, and led studies on African peacekeeping and the readiness of militaries to conduct operations to protect civilians. My views are also shaped by my experience working at the US State Department on these issues, where I saw how efforts to support peacekeeping reforms were hampered by US arrears to the United Nations.

I. Current Peace Operations and Challenges

Increased Operations, New Missions. Members of the UN Security Council, including the United States, have approved an unprecedented number and level of UN peace operations. This growth has been acute since 2003. New UN-led peacekeeping operations have been established in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Haiti, and most recently, Sudan in the last two years. In addition to these five missions, the UN operation in the vast Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was substantially expanded in 2003 and 2004, with authorized forces growing from 5,537 personnel in 2000 to 16,700 peacekeepers today. This growth built on the large and complex missions established in 1999-2000 at the end of the Clinton Administration in the DRC, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Ethiopia/Eritrea.

Supported by the Bush Administration, the UN today is leading 17 peace operations with over 67,000 military and police personnel and nearly 15,000 civilian staff from 103 countries. The UN is busy recruiting another 10,000 troops for the new UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). In addition, the UN runs another ten political and peacebuilding missions, such as the assistance mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the assistance mission in Iraq (UNAMI) which get operational support from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Stress on UN Headquarters, Troop Contributors. This level of UN operations is unprecedented. Demands on UN headquarters and troop contributing countries are significant. Eight of the UN's peacekeeping operations are currently in Africa, absorbing 75 percent of the UN troops in areas that frequently have substantial transportation and infrastructure challenges. Many missions are multidimensional, complex, and operating in difficult environments with Chapter VII authority, where conflicts and insecurity continue to challenge fragile peace agreements and threaten the security of civilians. Peacekeepers are also asked to help with increased support to peacebuilding, such as assistance with electoral support; with establishment of rule of law and policing; and with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former fights. At the same time, they are also asked to move beyond traditional roles to be better prepared to use force and protect civilians.

Who are today's UN peacekeepers? The top 15 troop contributing countries provide 75 percent of peacekeepers today. All are developing states, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, Jordan, Uruguay and South Africa.[1] When developing nations provide personnel for peacekeeping missions, they frequently require outside material and financial support from the UN and bilateral partners, such as transportation, logistics, equipment, and planning and organizational support. Many developed states with highly skilled armed services are stretched by their increased military commitments, such as in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.[2] No Western European country currently contributes more than 600 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions. The United States provides about 375 peacekeepers to UN operations, nearly all of whom are civilian police.

[1] The top 15 also include Morocco, Senegal, Kenya, Brazil and China. Data from the UN, April 2005.

[2] Major powers have recently intervened in African conflicts, primarily to help stabilize immediate crises, such as the British deployment to Sierra Leone (2000), the French intervention in Côte d'Ivoire (2002), the French-led EU mission in the DRC (2003), and the American support to the ECOWAS mission in Liberia (2003). The Stand-by High Readiness Brigade, composed of 16 nations (mostly developed and European) played a pivotal role in setting up the UN mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea (2000) and helping transition from ECOWAS to UN missions.

So who oversees UN peace operations? Responsibility for planning, organizing, managing, and supporting these missions is primarily the job of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations within the UN Secretariat in New York. The DPKO is in charge of evaluating the requirements of a potential peace operation, providing recommendations to the Security Council through the Secretary-General, and responsible for mission planning. DPKO also recruits troops and police from contributing countries, matches requirements to budgets, determines equipment and logistical needs, sets up pre-deployment training and oversees deployment of the forces. They also work within the UN to integrate mission planning with offices responsible for humanitarian, political and relief efforts, such as the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs and UNHCR, among others.

The DPKO has a headquarters staff of only 600 people. That may seem like a reasonable number until you realize they are overseeing over 82,000 personnel in the field. In New York, roughly two dozen people, for example, are in charge of recruiting and managing the UN's civilian police, which total about 6,000 in the field. The job is especially difficult, since most police are recruited as individuals or in small units, unlike peacekeepers.

With ratios like this, peace operations depend on smart planning and management; on skilled mission leaders; on the quality and effectiveness of military and civilian personnel; and on Council mandates being clear and matched with the resources and political support needed to meet their goals. Underlying all of this is the fundamental requirement that peacekeepers be given jobs that they can accomplish. Peacekeeping is a temporary measure to provide security, and that security is offered so that peacebuilding efforts can succeed. Peace operations are smart gambles, but their success depends on the leaders and civil society of a region to support an end to conflict. Peace relies ultimately on them, not the United Nations.

II. UN Reforms and Peacekeeping

Reforms should close gaps between peacekeeping goals and what is needed to meet those goals. The UN has moved to narrow gaps between Council mandates and what peacekeepers can do in the field; within headquarters planning and supporting missions; by increasing skilled mission leadership; and finally, by developing systems for more effective and rapid deployments. These and other areas deserve attention.

The Brahimi Report and Peacekeeping Reforms. In 2000, the report of the expert *Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* recommended specific reform measures to deal with the challenges of peacekeeping, based on a review of operations during the 1990s. Named for its dynamic chair, UN Under Secretary-General Lakhdar Brahimi, the Brahimi Report recommendations have met with much support. Of more than 80 recommendations, I will highlight a few key areas here.[3] On-going UN reform efforts and the December 2004 High-level Panel Report also built on the Report and the process it launched.[4]

[3] This review draws from our study of the implementation of the Brahimi Report. See, William Durch, Victoria Holt, Caroline Earle, and Moira Shanahan. *The Brahimi Report and the Future of Peace Operations* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC), November 2003; at www.stimson.org/fopo.

[4] *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, United Nations, December 2004.

- ***Skilled management and headquarters capacity.*** The Report emphasized that the UN needed a substantive capacity to manage, organize and support UN peacekeeping missions. Member states responded by supporting an improved professional staff at UN headquarters, better leadership selection for missions, identification of skilled civilians to send to field missions, and an improved planning capacity. Today, however, UN headquarters staff are stretched thin by the increase in operations. Some smart additions to UN Secretariat staff could enable them to support their workload more effectively, as well as provide support to prevent all forms of personnel misconduct. The High-level Panel report recommended filling the large gap in civilian police and rule of law experts, for example, and by creating a corps of skilled personnel (50-100 people) who could help evaluate and start-up missions. This recommendation should be fully supported.[5] Mission leaders now meet in advance of deployments to review their mandates and talk with their colleagues, but on-call lists of key personnel and leadership personnel still need strengthening. Further, the development of Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs) has helped move UN planning forward in advance of operations; their effectiveness is hindered by stovepiped decision-making, however.

- ***More rapid and effective deployments.*** The UN adopted clearer timelines for deployments. Their goal is to deploy a traditional peacekeeping operation within 30 days and a complex operation within 90 days of a Security Council resolution. To prevent equipment-related delays that plagued so many missions, advance planning and acquisition of stocks has been implemented. With US support, the UN now has Strategic Deployment Stocks (SDS), which include a mix of contracts and supplies ready to support deployments, coordinated through the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy. But this excellent reform was established to support one new operation per year, not the current level of two or more. As a result, the SDS has been depleted by the pace of current operations and needs resupplying. The UN also needs better analytical and information capacity; proposal for developing this area have been supported by the US but not yet adopted.

- ***Quality personnel and member state support***. Skilled personnel are the backbone of peacekeeping. UN capacity depends on the quantity and quality of troops, police and civilian personnel provided by member states. For complex operations, the skills and coherence of the force are critical. National efforts to collaborate in training and equipping brigade-sized forces can assist more effective deployments. Better use of the revised UN Stand-by Arrangements System (UNSAS), a voluntary listing by member states of the resources they *could* provide to an operation, would support improved planning and more effective operations. More countries need to participate in UNSAS to make it effective. UNSAS lacks sufficient numbers of coherent brigades, logistical support and other enabling units. Supplies can plague missions, delaying deployment of military personnel for the DRC and of qualified police for Liberia.

[5] Over 75 percent of the police recruits for the UN mission in Liberia, for example, failed the test for basic qualifications in the mission; similar numbers were cited for the DRC. Interview, UN DPKO, October 2003.

Civilian Protection. The 1990s witnessed the failure of UN forces to defend civilians within the safe area of Srebrenica and UN member state unwillingness to send forces into the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. These crises led to the recognition that peacekeepers needed clear direction to provide protection to civilians. Since 1999, the UN has included language within Security Council mandates for Chapter VII operations that peacekeepers should provide for the "protection of civilians under imminent threat" within a mission area. This language is an important step toward clarifying mission responsibilities.

But what does protection of civilians mean to troop contributing countries? Member states and the United Nations are still sorting this out. Troop contributing countries need to be briefed in advance that their forces may face threats on the ground. Rules of engagement must allow for the use of force in specific scenarios including and going beyond self-defense, and that needs to be understood by both the political and military leadership in an operation. Forces need doctrine or UN guidance on how to operate in such missions with civilian protection mandates. Protection also relies on forces having the capacity and mobility to act. Mission leaders need to understand the concept of operations as it relates to the protection of civilians within a mission area. DPKO has had a limited ability to demand that troops first have specific skills and training before deployment into an operation. Both doctrine and training are considered state responsibilities, and member states need to develop both to support missions involving protection.

Working with Regional and Subregional Organizations. A dramatic shift in the last five years is the increased role of regional actors in peace operations. Especially in Africa, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have begun to build their capacity for leading peace operations. While still small organizations (their headquarters staff for managing peace operations number around two dozen people), they have demonstrated political will and an ability to organize troops, as seen with their operations in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi and Sudan since 2002. The US and other G8 countries have supported these developments and helped fund their peace operations with bilateral funding.

How can the UN work more effectively with such regional groups on peace operations? The United Nations is designed to run UN-led peace operations, not support the deployment of troops by other groups. The United Nations has assisted both the AU and ECOWAS with planning missions and transitioning their operations to UN leadership. But a more formalized capacity for the UN is needed to support regional efforts with logistics or equipment, planning and management support, or funding of operations. The High-level Panel pointed to the need to make this relationship more standardized, and suggested that the UN consider funding for regional groups with assessed contributions to members states. The United States should look at the feasibility of such a proposal for case-by-case evaluation. Providing some UN professional support to regional groups could assist both their efforts and the United Nations', enhance planning and management of operations, and prevent duplication of effort.[6] Such an effort could further leverage capacity by building on US and G8 efforts to increase African peacekeeping capacity.

[6] Developments in this way could breathe real life into Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which recognizes regional arrangements but does not trigger any direct UN support when cited by the Security Council.

Funding & the US Share of Costs. With increased operations, assessed costs for peacekeeping have risen for member states. In the last two years, the UN peacekeeping budget has increased from an expenditure of $2.3 billion in 2002-2003 to approaching $5 billion for next year's estimated costs of peace operations. Congress is likely to face sticker shock over these increased budget levels. The US assessed share is 27 percent of the budget, which is likely to require $1.2 billion for fiscal year 2005 and $1.3 billion for fiscal year 2006.

Why are costs so high? First, peacekeeping assessments are based on the expense of the missions themselves, which have increased dramatically. The costs directly reflect the funding to pay for troops, civilian personnel, equipment, transportation and the other components of the field operations. A small fraction of assessed funding for peace operations goes to pay for the UN headquarters staff and their work. Those costs came in at five percent or less of the assessments from 1999 to 2004, making UN overhead miniscule in comparison to the field operations.[7]

Further, UN peace operations are less expensive than other forms of peacekeeping missions. When UN costs per peacekeeper are compared to the costs of troops deployed by the United States, developed states or NATO, the UN is the least expensive option by far. Rough estimates by the Stimson Center show that US forces cost approximately double that of forces deployed by the United Nations. Given that the US pays for just over one-fourth of the peace operations budget, but provides virtually no personnel to support the 17 operations, the US share seems to have high return on its funding – resulting in over 67,000 peacekeepers in the field. Conversely, delays in funding to the United Nations can have a swift and substantial impact on peace operations, impeding troops contributing countries and impacting current missions.

III. Recommendations for US Policy and Leadership

The recent and dramatic increase in UN peace operations is a sign of cautious optimism rather than a signal that conflicts are expanding worldwide. Peacekeepers are not sent to wage war; they are provided to help shift from conflict to a negotiated peace, such as when peace agreements are hammered out and when combatants agree to put down their arms. Even with these conditions, today's peacekeepers may face dangerous neighborhoods, tenuous peace agreements, unreasonable expectations and too little back-up. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States' only major peacekeeping role in Africa has been in Somalia. In an environment where U.S. military participation in or leadership of peace operations is minimal, a natural question is what else can the U.S. do to help other actors respond effectively?

First, the US should increase its efforts to improve UN capacities for peace operations. The United States can play a strong and effective role in pressing for UN reforms. Better support is needed for the UN's management and planning capacity, rapid and effective deployments, and personnel. The need for qualified and skilled civilian police (CivPol), and rule of law experts (judges, corrections, penal and human rights) outpaces their availability for operations. The US should strongly support the High-level Panel recommendation for a small corps of skilled personnel in this area.

[7] Durch and Holt, *The Brahimi Report and the Future of Peace Operations*, Table D-1, page 130.

Member states should be pressed to send their best and brightest for leadership positions of peacekeeping mission; to offer specialized skill sets and contingents of civilian police; to train regionally with other military contingents to offer to UN operations. The UN Secretariat also needs to use its internal planning process, making the Integrated Mission Task Forces truly function for planning of missions, and excise the stovepipes that exist today in decision-making.

The US should also press member states to support sufficient supplies in the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy to sustain deployment of more than one major peace operations each year.[8] Better participation in the UN Stand-by Arrangements System would help match contributors' capabilities during the planning stage for more effective deployments. The US should also identify clear DPKO guidance on civilian protection. Finally, the US could advocate better UN coordination with African regional organizations and a more formal mechanism for the UN to provide support to their capacity-building for peace operations.

Second, US programs to enhance peace operations deserve support. Within the State Department budget, two accounts need the Committee's support:

- *The Voluntary Peacekeeping Operations account*, requested at $196 million for fiscal year 2005 (FY06), is the central source of support to regional efforts and organizations, especially in Africa for US training of African forces with the Global Peace Operations Initiative (formerly the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program), and to enable US bilateral assistance to African missions (e.g., support for regional peace efforts, the AU and ECOWAS.)

- *The Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities* (CIPA), requested at $1.03 billion for fiscal year 2006, provides the US share (27%) of contributions for UN peace operations. This request is less than the $1.3 billion projected as needed for the coming year. Further, this budget is without any funding to support initiatives that invest in capacity-building and longer-term reform efforts, which limits the US ability to promote such reforms at the United Nations or within specific missions. Finally, Congress should lift the "cap" on peacekeeping funding from 25 to 27 percent, bringing US payments in line with the US-negotiated assessment rate.

Third, the US should devise a clear strategy on achieving UN peacekeeping reform. **W**e have learned the importance of professionalizing peace operations from our own experiences, ranging from Somalia to Afghanistan, from the Balkans to Iraq. This is not easy work: It takes political will and resources, and unrelenting attention, which I know the members of this Committee understand.

Congress should empower the Administration and our next UN Ambassador to argue forcefully for UN reforms. I urge the Committee to strengthen the US hand in New York and also in capitols, which would demonstrate American seriousness. We must start by assisting the Permanent Representative to the United Nations with a clear mandate to press for UN effectiveness, including urging the members of the UN to adopt and follow up on ending sexual abuse and exploitation, and providing firm support for the measures developed out of the Ziad

[8] The UN logistics base in Brindisi, Italy, is currently configured to support deployment of one new complex UN peacekeeping operation annually. Given the current pace of UN operations, this is not sufficient in 2004.

Report. These reforms include setting uniform standards and training, and creating professional personnel and units dedicated to investigating and policing misconduct.

The United States will be most effective if it keeps current with its share of assessed funding for peacekeeping operations. Some have suggested that limiting or conditioning US funding to the United Nations is a useful way to convince other member states to support our reform agenda, especially to spur accountability for corrupt peacekeepers and to leverage change in this area. This is unlikely to be the case, unfortunately, for two reasons. First, conditioning our funding for UN peacekeeping will hinder current operations, such as in Sudan, as it reduce UN resources to recruit and deploy troops. If the US cuts support to UN peacekeeping operations, those who may suffer are the very people peacekeepers are meant to protect. We will undermine missions whose goals we support. In the DRC, for example, millions have died from war-related causes, estimated at approximately 30,000 civilians every month.[9]

Second, our critics and opponents should not be given grounds to ignore our reform agenda. We saw this dynamic during the 1990s debate over UN arrears, when the United States sought to reduce its share of assessed peacekeeping costs from roughly 30 percent to today's rate of 27 percent. The substantive US case was overshadowed by the funding crisis, and US withholding money for peace operations. Those arrears gave our opponents ammunition against the US position and our friends little motivation to listen to us. Only after extraordinary work led by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, supported by Congress, did the many years of effort result in a change in our assessment rates.

At the end of the day, US interests are served by effective peace operations. As a nation concerned with both security and humanitarianism, the United States can work within the UN to promote these goals and values, and to so fully and effectively.

[9] Figures based on reporting by the International Rescue Committee.